

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A slider of a thin-film magnetic head, comprising:
a medium facing surface that faces toward a recording medium;
a substrate having a first surface that faces toward the recording medium and is located farther from the recording medium than the medium facing surface; and a second surface that meets the first surface;
a thin-film magnetic head element located near the second surface of the substrate and near the medium facing surface;
an insulating portion surrounding the thin-film magnetic head element and having a surface that constitutes a part of the medium facing surface; and
a medium facing layer located adjacent to the first surface of the substrate and having a surface that constitutes another part of the medium facing surface, wherein:
the first surface of the substrate is located farther from the recording medium than the surface of the insulating portion that constitutes the part of the medium facing surface when the medium facing surface is parallel to the recording medium;
the medium facing layer does not cover the surface of the insulating portion that constitutes the part of the medium facing surface;
the substrate has a hardness greater than that of the insulating portion, and
as the substrate and the medium facing layer are compared in hardness, the medium facing layer has a hardness closer to that of the insulating portion.
2. (Original) A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the medium facing surface has a concavity/convexity for controlling flying of the slider over the recording medium.

3. (Original) A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the main material of the insulating portion and the material of the medium facing layer are the same.

4. (Original) A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 3, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of alumina.

5. (Original) A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of diamond-like carbon.